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What the College May Do for the Denomination

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"What the College May Do for the Denomination."

By way of introduction to my theme, I wish to state without amplification or exposition seven propositions which will constitute a background for the brief discussion I shall present.

1. Viewing history as a whole, it may be said that with scarcely an exception the universal world policy has been that religion or the religious representatives have determined the education which has been given to the youth of both sexes: this has been largely true in nations civilized and semi-civilized, in times ancient and modern. Our own country would seem to be the brilliant exception, but careful analysis would show that it is only an apparent exception.

2. The Church, both Jewish and Christian, has always used the school as an indispensable part of its institutional equipment in discharging its mission, and it would seem as if this would argue that the school was a part of the divine plan for the organization and equipment of the Church.

3. The Presbyterian Church, in all of its branches, has emphasized education through the school as an essential part of the function of the Church.

4. The Southern Presbyterian Church, through many of its General Assemblies, through all of its Synods, and a large

part of its Presbyteries, has affirmed over and over again this historic doctrine of the Presbyterian Church in relation to education and the school.

5. Despite all the splendor of the golden past of this section which terminated fifty years ago, and which is still surrounded with a halo of glory in the minds of many of our own people, there were few large gifts to education which marked that bright epoch which so many still worship. It is a signal indictment of the old regime in the South that its men of wealth and culture recognized so slightly the duty of wealth to build great and strong educational foundations.

6. The Presbyterian Church in this country and especially in our section has lost that primacy in the field of education which for so long a time was one of its distinguishing characteristics. A few years, there were two Methodist colleges in the South which had more endowment than all of our Southern Presbyterian colleges put together.

7. There is an educational revival sweeping over all the churches of our country shown in the nation-wide campaign, shared in by all denominations, for the larger endowment and equipment of all educational institutions under Church control.

I beg the privilege of enforcing this duty by presenting four of the many distinct services which the college may render the denomination:

1. The college strengthens through expression the best life of the denomination.

(a). Historically, each denomination has worked out its own ideal and reduced that ideal to actuality in the schools it has founded.

(b). The wisest men in each denomination have wrought, with all their might and with the consecration of all their powers, at the task of putting into the form of an institution which we call the college, their fundamental beliefs, their ideals, their views of life, their doctrine of growth or education—in short, all that distinctively marks them as a sect or denomination. The splendid names which shine like stars in the records of the denomination have in many or most cases served their generation by the will of God in connection with their schools. The wisest administrators in each denomination are now on the Boards of Control of these colleges, and their wisdom and counsel incarnated in the policies, the curricula, the equipment, the educational services which these institutions render.

(c). The faculties in these colleges are composed of the choicest men which the denomination can furnish, representing the best culture and devotion, the highest standards and aspirations of their respective Churches.

(d). The students in these colleges are selected youth from our best homes and

as plastic material they take on most easily and certainly the mold or type which their denomination has worked out to be impressed on them through their college.

If, therefore, we wish to judge the denominations as to "sweetness and light," as to breadth and reality of culture, as to catholicity of vision and sympathy, as to practical success and efficiency, as to scientific and at the same time biblical grasp of the real meaning of life, as to their genuine comprehension of the true significance of the "Kingdom of God" we must put the college of these denominations to the test and turn on the electric light as we inspect them with a searching scrutiny which leaves nothing undisclosed as to curriculum, equipment, faculty, student body, endowments, laboratories, libraries, history, traditions, and that inner essential spirit which makes the life of the school. We will know our denomination by our college: and we will be known by other denominations even as we know them through that infallible evidence which the Church college bears.

2. The college develops in the denomination a balanced and wisely adjusted beneficence.

(a). The college during its entire history will always have financial needs. Constant readjustment to new or freshly discovered demands of advancing educational science will require funds to meet

the fresh need or make the new adjustment. For the sake of Presbyterianism and the college, may the day never come when its pressing needs will not call loudly for large applications of gold and silver and certified checks to cure the "growing pains" which are a necessary part of the life of every developing educational institution.

(b). The college will always receive from the beneficence of the Church the money which its necessities require, because those necessities will certainly and infallibly be pleaded. It would be worse than a crime, it would be a suicidal blunder for the wise administrators of the college to allow its needs to go unadvertised and unheralded. No trumpet tongue can be too loud with which to proclaim them.

(c). And the wisdom and philanthropy of a consecrated and instructed Church can not permit those needs to cry aloud without the satisfying answer of golden benedictions and liberal subscriptions. There are three certainties in the normal and legitimate life of every college, (*1*) the college will have needs, (*2*) those needs will be presented by convincing and persuasive pleaders, and (*3*) those needs will be supplied by the generous and wise liberality of a loyal and aggressive Church.

(d). And there is a fourth certainty which is just as sure, viz.: this liberality will be so related to the whole scheme of

the Church's work that it will develop a balanced and wisely adjusted beneficence. No great cause, no other worthy interest will suffer. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." It is the insanity of crazed folly to imagine that money given to the college is withdrawn from Foreign Missions or Home Missions or Publication or some other great educational enterprise. The vision of the college is itself so missionary, educational and evangelistic that money bestowed on the college reacts inevitably to increase the tide of contributions to Missions and education and evangelism. Presbyterian philanthropy and beneficence can not be made fractional or one-sided by large attention to the ever pressing needs of the institution which it has created for the very purpose of expressing through it the whole spirit and genius of the denomination.

(e). Nor can Presbyterian beneficence be easily exhausted. Ministers and Church officers are sometimes too timid in urging the needs of the Church and its institutions upon their members. If there is one thing a Presbyterian member can do, it is to take care of himself in this reference. If there is another thing that he proposes to do, it is to bestow his beneficence as upon the whole he himself chooses. But in order to do this, he knows that he needs, and we know that he needs both the enlightenment of full information and the stimulus and the

pressure of rousing appeals which will not allow him to ignore his duty to give generously to the college of his Church. There are men in all our churches who with full information given and earnest appeals made are as certain to give to the college as that the college continues to serve the Church. There are men all over our Synods, in increasing numbers, who by wise persistence in this process of information plus appeal will grow into cheerful, yea, into— hilarious givers. Their own souls will be "made fat," their visions widened, their joy in the Lord tenfolded, their efficiency greatly multiplied by their enlarging beneficence.

3. The college prepares the leaders for the work of the Church and Kingdom.

(a). The ministers in all the denominations are largely the products of the denominational schools. Be the explanation what it may, the fact can not be gainsaid that all branches of the Church derive their preachers chiefly from their own educational institutions. The great State universities produce much good fruit in the shape of serviceable men for many secular uses, but none of them are prolific in developing ministers and missionaries. The Church which wishes an adequate supply of men to preach the Gospel at home and to carry it abroad must found and foster its own college, and the more the churches fostering care enriches its own college the larger the harvest it reaps of ministers, evangelists and missionaries.

(b). But not only ministers, but instructed Church officials in the eldership and the diaconate are no small part of the contribution of the college to the denomination. Elders who have a vision of the breadth of the Kingdom and deacons "who can see afar off" and are not troubled with that spiritual myopia which does not reach beyond the boundaries of their own little parish—these are the trained men whom the college sends forth to cooperate with their ministers in leading the "hosts of Israel." Paul contended with the "beasts at Ephesus." I think they were recalcitrant elders or recusant deacons. John was disturbed by Diotrephes and was glad of the cooperation of Demetrius; and success for the ministers and the Church is often settled by the issue whether Diotrephes leads or Demetrius cooperates. Elders who can see and deacons who are not blind will make almost any Church go; and the chance of securing them is greatly increased by having the college which equips the youth of the Church for these positions, by giving them the vision of the consecrated and cultivated Christian and of the true citizen of the Kingdom of God.

(c). Private members too who receive in the college the culture which knows not only science and art, history and literature, but religion and the divine book—these are the men, who in the last analysis carry on most effectively the work of the divine Kingdom. To make the prin-

ciples of the Kingdom regnant everywhere is the work of the men and women who go everywhere into all the walks of life. In law, medicine, commerce, in journalism, teaching, farming, in engineering, home creation and administration, in politics, economics, society, "at home and abroad, on the land and sea," if those who call themselves by the name of Christ have the vision to see the meaning of His will and His Kingdom and the courage to apply the light which they get from the face of Christ to every circumstance and condition of human life, then the coming of the Kingdom is as sure as the application of Christ's will is honest and complete and courageous. And there is no better place in the whole of God's world for developing men and women of this type than the Christian college founded by the denomination, administered in faith and wisdom, dominated through and through by the unseen yet almighty presence of the Spirit of Christ Himself.

4. The college leads the aggressive forces of the denomination in all advance movements.

(a). In education, the college blazes the way for most of the necessary advances and adjustments, which reduce to practice the wise theories and discoveries of specialists and educationalists. It is the educational practice of the Church colleges which silently and yet well-nigh omnipotently forces the secular and State institutions to introduce morals and re-

ligion into the curriculum, yea to give the Bible itself, as at the University of Virginia, a recognized place amongst the courses of study offered to its students.

(b). Not the least of the services rendered by the denominational institutions is their indirect influence in literature. The list of contributors to the highest forms of art by those connected with the denominational institutions is so large as to fill with astonishment those who have not examined the history of literature from this point of view. You would impoverish American literature beyond all telling if you were to destroy at one blow the products of the Church's schools.

(c). In science, though its laboratories and museums are not as richly equipped as the more largely endowed and supported secular schools, the Church institutions do not suffer by a comparison as to discoveries made or advances secured by teachers and graduates.

(d). In missions, which represents the democratic doctrine that every man born into the world has a right to the very best which the world has in every sphere of the world's life and work, the denominational colleges at home and abroad are the dynamos which furnish both the missionary fire and the missionary men. Read John R. Mott's little classic entitled "Strategic Points in the World's Conquest" and see how the Church's schools in the home land and on the foreign field

are the keys to the coming triumph of the Kingdom, which may linger, but which is sure to come in large measure through the splendid services of these Christian schools.

But the time fails me to expand this growing register, this emblazoned catalogue of the services of the Christian college to every worthy interest, to every noble cause which stands for the highest and best which our race can know and do. Its service has often been a saving salt which has purified and exalted or else preserved civic and municipal life, state and national politics, business and commercial enterprises, intellectual and esthetic advance, moral and religious welfare. If the Christian colleges of America had never been, this country had never been what it is today, the world's leader in all the ideas which stand for individual liberty and worth, for social righteousness and international justice, and it had never produced a great individual world leader such as our president, born in the manse of a Presbyterian preacher who served as professor in three of our Church schools—Hampden-Sidney College, Columbia Seminary and Southwestern Presbyterian University—and whose son incarnates in his own character and work the ideals and the ideas which he breathed into the very make-up of his being from the environments of these schools in whose atmosphere and spirit he was reared. The incarnation and embodiment

of the Christian college is Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States.

In closing, my subject applies itself—it needs no studied or extensive application. If the college serves the denomination by being the very best expression of the denomination's life, if it develops in the denomination a balanced and wisely adopted beneficence, if it prepares leaders for the work of the Church and Kingdom, if it leads the aggressive forces of the denomination in all advance movements, then we must found and support and strengthen the college.